

## MEGASTHENES' VISITS TO INDIA

The *Indika* written by Megasthenes, an ambassador of Seleucus Nikator to the court of Chandragupta Maurya<sup>1</sup>, is undoubtedly the most known text among Classical sources on ancient Indian history. Meanwhile neither time nor aim of Megasthenes' coming to India and his stay there are not clear. It is not known either how many times he was in India and which regions he visited. The answer on these questions would help to understand realities of what Indian regions could be reflected in his *Indika*, what local dialects could influence the transmission of historical or geographical categories, in what connection his *Indika* stood with the diaries of Alexander's writers. As to the biography of Megasthenes the only absolutely clear fact is that for a while he lived with Sybirtios – the satrap of Hydrozia and Arakhozia – and was sent to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, where he composed his description of the neighboring country. «... καὶ Μεγασθένης

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1. In the Indian historiography there is still quite a strong tendency to see in Sadrokottos, to which Megasthenes paid his visits, not Chandragupta Maurya, but Samudragupta – the founder of the Gupta dynasty (IV-V C. A.D.). Basing on this supposition some authors try to completely rewrite ancient Indian chronology after the Alexander the Great's campaign: K.D. SETHNA, "Megasthenes and Indian Chronology as Based on the *Purāṇas*", in *Purāṇa*, 1966, Vol. 8, n. 1, p. 9-37; 1966, Vol. 8, n. 2, p. 276-294; 1968, Vol. 10, n. 2, p. 124-47; IDEM, "Xandrames of the Classical Account and His Purāṇic Counterparts", in *Purāṇa*, 1967, Vol. 9, n. 1, p. 121-139; D. S. TRIVEDA, "Alexander's Contemporary: Samudragupta or Candragupta Maurya?", in *Bhāratiya Vidyā*, 1993, Vol. 53, n.-2. p. 12-28.

ὅς σὺνην μὲν Σιβυρτίῳ τῷ σατράπῃ τῆς Ἀραχωσίας πολλάκις δὲ λέγει ἀφικέσθαι παρὰ Σανδράκοττον τὸν Ἰνδῶν βασιλέα...» (Arr. Anab. V. 6. 2)<sup>2</sup>; «...τὸν δὲ βασιλεύοντα ἐπώνυμον δεῖν τῆς πόλεως εἶναι Παλίβοθρον καλούμενον πρὸς τῷ ἰδίῳ τῷ ἐκ γενετῆς ὀνόματι καθάπερ τὸν Σανδρόκοττον πρὸς ὃν ἦκεν ὁ Μεγασθένης πεμφθεῖς...» (Strabo. XV. I. 36)<sup>3</sup>. The most debated question is: how many times was Megasthenes in India and could he meet king Porus, who ruled in North-Western part of India even after the Alexander's campaign and before the enthronement of Chandragupta. One of the keys for solving this question is the understanding of the proper meaning of the following phrase of the *Indika* of Arrian: «...συγγενέσθαι γὰρ Σανδροκόττῳ λέγει τῷ μεγίστῳ βασιλεῖ Ἰνδῶν καὶ Πώρῳ ἔτι τούτου μείζονι...» (V. 3)<sup>4</sup>. Before we turn to the analysis of the above-mentioned lines and other related sources, let's look through the previous interpretations of this problem in European and Indian historiography.

In the Introduction to the first edition of Megasthenes' fragments C. Müller paid attention to Megasthenes' visits to India. He thought that exact dating of his visits to India and their duration were not possible to establish and connect the necessity of Megasthenes' visits with conclusion of the agreement between Seleucus and Chandragupta Maurya, saying that it could take place between 302 and 288 B.C.<sup>5</sup> C. Müller rejected the possibility of the meeting of Megasthenes with Porus before 317 B.C. He relied on the opinion of E. Schwanbeck, who proposed the correction of the second part of the above mentioned phrase from the *Indika* of Arrian (V. 3) «... καὶ Πώρῳ ἔτι τούτου μείζονι» on «... καὶ Πόρου ἔτι τούτῳ μείζονι», suggesting that this

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2. «... and Megasthenes, who lived with Sybirtios – the satrap of Arakhosia – says, that he often went to Sandrocottos, king of Indians...» (transl. by G.M. B.-L. and M.B.).

3. «...and the reigning king must be surnamed after the city, being called Palibothrus in addition to his own family name, as, for example, king Sandrocottos, to whom Megasthenes was sent to an embassy...» (transl. by H. L. Jones).

4. «...he says that he met Sandrocottos, the greatest king of India and Porus who was even greater than that...» (transl. by G.M. B.-L. and M.B.).

5. C. MÜLLERUS, "Megasthenes", in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum. Collegit, Disposuit, Notis et Prolegominis Illustravit Carolus Müllerus*. Vol. II. Parisiis, 1847, p. 398.

amendment makes it clearer, and that of Ch. Lassen, who thought that the mentioning of Porus in connection with Megasthenes was an interpolation<sup>6</sup>. It is interesting to note that commenting the text of Megasthenes, C. Müller was not so strict and giving both versions, let the reader decide, which is true<sup>7</sup>.

Following Justinus' note (XV. 4. 2): «*Sic acquisito regnò, Sandracottus, ea tempestate, qua Seleucus futurae magnitudinis fundamenta iaciebat, Indiam possidebat: cum quo facta pactione Seleucus, compositisque in Oriente, in bellum Antigoni descendit*»<sup>8</sup>, J. W. Mc'Crindle thought that Megasthenes could be sent to India no earlier than 302 B.C., when, having signed an agreement with first Maurya, Seleucus initiated the war against Antigonus<sup>9</sup>. As to the probability of the Megasthenes' meeting with another Indian king – Porus before his death in 317 B.C. (Diod. XIX. 14. 8), Mc'Crindle agreed with the correction of the Arrian's text (Ind. V. 3) on «καὶ Πύρου ἔτι τούτῳ μείζονι»<sup>10</sup>, proposed by E. Schwanbeck, Ch. Lassen and C. Müller, thinking that its exclusion was absolutely necessary. Considering the quantity of Megasthenes' visits to India, he interpreted the text of Arrian (Anab. V. 6. 2) «...πολλάκις δὲ λέγει (Μεγασθένης) ἀφικέσθαι παρὰ Σανδράκοττον τὸν Ἰνδῶν βασιλέα...» in a way, that Megasthenes often interviewed Indian king, but not paid visits<sup>11</sup>, thus insisting on one long, but not a few short visits.

V.A. Smith supposed that Megasthenes could be sent to India after the conclusion of agreement between Seleucus and Chandragupta in 303 B.C. According to his point of view, description

6. *Ibid.*

7. C. MÜLLERUS, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

8. «Thus Sandrocottus having gained royal power ruled India, when Seleucus was putting the foundation of his future magnitude. Seleucus signed the agreement with Sandrocottus and, having solved the problems on the East, started campaign against Antigonus» (transl. by G.M. B.-L. and M.B.).

9. *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian, Being a Translation of the Fragments of the Indika of Megasthenes and of the First Part of the Indika of Arrian*, Collected by E.A. SCHWANBECK, Transl. by J.W. MC'CRINDLE, Calcutta, 1960 (1877), p. 7.

10. *Ibid.* p. 14.

11. J. W. MC'CRINDLE, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

of Indian geography and social institutes, represented in the *Indika* of Megasthenes, are worthy of trust<sup>12</sup>.

A special attention to this problem has been paid in the works of Otto Stein. In brief his opinion is as follows: having reached Indian boundaries, Seleucus had to wage a short war or just transmitted to the neighbouring ruler those regions, that he would not be able to retain, for 500 elephants, used in the battle by Ipsos against Antigonos in 301 B.C. So, the results of Indo-Seleucid conflict were more profitable for Seleucus. After the conclusion of the peace agreement Megasthenes was sent to the Indian court<sup>13</sup>. As to the biography of Seleucid ambassador, he thought that the only fixed fact was that Megasthenes was Greek by origin<sup>14</sup>. One long term stay in India until coming of Deimachus after the death or dethronement of Chandragupta in 304-292 B.C. he considered the most probable explanation of Megasthenes' visit to India<sup>15</sup>. It was not possible, said O. Stein, to establish which regions Megasthenes visited, but in any case he has been replaced by Deimachus due to the enduring climate of Eastern India. Since Sybirtius was appointed as a satrap no earlier than 324 B.C., Megasthenes had to be born in about 350 B.C. to become his assistant. According to O. Stein, Megasthenes possessed special information on India, and was occupied by gathering such data on India even before his visit to Chandragupta. Megasthenes devoted his free time to the composition of his *Indika*. O. Stein supported the correction of the text of the *Indika* of Arrian where the power of Porus was compared to that of Sandrocottos, thinking that this mistake has been introduced by the scribe of Arrian's text under the influence of the Porus' legendary image. O. Stein has also added that under the name «Porus» may be hidden not that king who struggled against Alexander the Great, but any heir or successor of Chandragupta<sup>16</sup>.

B. Bröler believed that necessity to sign peace agreement was the main purpose of Megasthenes' visits to India. He also refused to pre-

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12. V.A. SMITH, *The Early History of India*, Oxf., 1908, p. 118-119.

13. O. STEIN, *Megasthenes und Kautaliya*, Wien, 1921, p. 4-7.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

15. *Idem*, "Megasthenes", in RE, 1931, Bd 15, Hlbd 29, p. 232.

16. *Ibid.*

cise the quantity of his visits to India and establish the regions that he visited<sup>17</sup>. Practically nothing on the biography of Megasthenes has been said in one of the basic works on his *Indika* – that by B. Timmer. She has just pointed out that Megasthenes was an ambassador of Seleucus I to court of Chandragupta Maurya<sup>18</sup>.

According to V. R. R. Dikshitar, nothing else, than the fact of Greek origin of Megasthenes, can not be gathered from the Classical sources. He doubted in one long term stay of Megasthenes in India between 302-288 B.C., because, according to him, the Seleucid ambassador knew neither language, nor Indian literature. He thought that Megasthenes paid only one visit to Chandragupta Maurya, but had often talks with the king. He thought that Megasthenes could meet Porus (probably on the basis of uncorrected text of Arrian). According to V. R. R. Dikshitar, Megasthenes went to India in order to conclude an agreement with Chandragupta and composed his *Indika* as a result of his official function<sup>19</sup>.

B. A. Saletore pointed out that the idea of long term visits was not known to ancient Indian diplomatic practice, that's why Megasthenes could not stay for any long period in Pataliputra. According to him, the only possible way is to accept the version of two Megasthenes' visits: the first – to Porus between 320 and 316 B.C. and the second after the conclusion of peace agreement between Seleucus and Chandragupta in 303-302 B.C. when he came as an ambassador to the court of the Maurya dynasty<sup>20</sup>.

T.S. Brown dated the war between Seleucus and Chandragupta to 305 B.C. He considered as impossible the precision of the date of Megasthenes' visit to India, and interpreted the above-mentioned phrase from the «Anabasis» of Arrian (V. 6. 2) as «often visit» but not «often talks»<sup>21</sup>. The same date of Syro-Indian conflict was proposed

17. B. BRELOER, *Kautaliya Studien*, Bd I, Leipzig-Bonn, 1927, p. 48.

18. B. TIMMER, *Megasthenes en de indische Maatschappij*, Amsterdam, 1930, p. 304.

19. V. R. R. DIKSHITAR, *The Mauryan Polity*, Madras, 1953, p. 34-36.

20. B. A. SALETORE, *India's Diplomatic Relations with the West*, Bombay, 1958, p. 139.

21. T. S. BROWN, "The Merits and Weaknesses of Megasthenes", in *Phoenix*, 1957, XI, p. 15.

by L. Skurzak<sup>22</sup> and F. F. Schwarz<sup>23</sup>. The latter considered the Indian campaign of Seleucus as disadvantageous for the Greeks, and 500 elephants and tranquillity on the Eastern boundaries of his empire as not sufficient compensation for lost regions<sup>24</sup>. According to F. F. Schwarz, Megasthenes must have been sent to India in 303 B.C. He also supports the idea of «often visits», but not that of «often talks» to the king<sup>25</sup>. These suggestions were repeated in his later works with only one difference – he has not precised the meaning of the verb «ἀφικνέομαι» in the text of Arrian (Anab. V. 6. 2), which is decisive for the establishing of the quantity of Megasthenes' visits to India<sup>26</sup>.

H. Scharfe dates the battle by Ipsos to 305-302 B.C. and, since Seleucus won it with the help of Indian elephants, he regards Indian campaign as more profitable for him than for Indian king<sup>27</sup>. The later date for Megasthenes visit to India – 300-280 B.C. was proposed by J. D. M. Derrett<sup>28</sup>.

A very original idea has been proposed by P. H. L. Eggermont. He thought that he might never be in Pataliputra. It is known that he has been to the military camp of Chandragupta (Str. XV. I. 54), where he could meet Indian king. This camp could be situated not far from Mathura, since Megasthenes was well aware of this region<sup>29</sup>.

There are some interesting points of view proposed by Russian historians. O. V. Kudryavtsev supported the O. Stein's opinion, thinking that Eastern campaign of Seleucus I was caused by understanding that

22. L. SKURZAK, "Le traité de paix en 305, selon Strabon et Appien d'Alexandre", in *Eos*, 1964, Vol. 54, p. 225.

23. F. F. SCHWARZ, "Mauryas und Seleukiden", in *Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft und Kulturkunde. Gedenkschrift für W. Brandenstein. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft*, 1968, Vol. XIV, n. 1, p. 225.

24. *Ibid.* p. 226.

25. *Ibid.* p. 227.

26. F.F. SCHWARZ, "Die Griechen und die Maurya Dinastie", in T. ALTHEIM, T. STIEHL, *Geschichte Mittelasiens in Altertum*, Berlin, 1970, p. 284; *Idem*, "Arrian's Indike. Intention and Reality", in *East and West*, 1975, Vol. XXV, p. 184.

27. H. SCHARFE, "The Maurya Dynasty and the Seleukids", in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 1971, n. 85, p. 216-217.

28. J.D.M. DERRETT, "Megasthenes", in *Der Kleine Pauly*, Bd III, Stuttgart, 1969, p. 1150.

29. P.H.L. EGGERMONT, "Heracles-Dorsanes and Priyadaršin Aśoka", in *Orientalia Lovanensia Periodica*, 1986, Vol. XVII, p. 160.

the possessions of Alexander the Great in Indus valley were very difficult to be retained and wish to establish peaceful trade and political contacts. According to him Megasthenes came to Pataliputra in 303 B.C.<sup>30</sup>. Translating the above mentioned phrase of the *Indika* of Arrian (V. 3) he rejected the correction proposed by E. Schwanbeck<sup>31</sup>.

A. A. Vigasin in his personal communication suggested that correction of Arrian's text (Ind. V. 3) seems not convincing. He thinks that the original text might be as follows: «καὶ Πόρω ἔτι τούτου μείζον», interpreting it as «... and with Porus even much more», i.e. that Megasthenes was staying with Porus before 317 B.C. even longer than with Sandrocottos.

Let's start the analysis of the above mentioned opinions and the data of Classical texts by the dating of Megasthenes' visits to India. This problem is closely connected with the time of combat actions between Seleucus I and Chandragupta Maurya and signing peace agreement. Practically all authors (except O. V. Kudryavtsev and J. D. M. Derrett) date it earlier than the battle at Ipsos between Seleucus and Antigonos in 301 B.C., but no argument has been put forward for establishing of any date.

The only ground for accepted sequence of events is a short notice by Justinus (XV. 4. 2). Meanwhile the value of Justinus' epitoms on the early history of Seleucids is strongly doubted for a long time<sup>32</sup>. Absolutely different version is proposed by much more reliable source – Appianus. Telling how Seleucus came to power, he clearly puts all the events of Syro-Indian war after his battle with Antigonos. According to Appianus (Syr. 55), Seleucus, having become the king of Babylonia, has shared the lands of Antigonos, killed at Ipsos in 301 B.C., with the enemies of the latter. Then, due to his abilities and talents he started spreading his influence to the East: Mesopotamia, Armenia, Kappadokia, Persia, Parthia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Arakhosia and all other neighbouring tribes subsequently came under his rule. Only then he rea-

30. O.V. KUDRYAVTSEV, "Classical Writers on India", in VDI [Journal of Ancient History]. 1940, n. 2, p. 224 (in Russian).

31. Arrian. *Indiya*. Translation by O.V. KUDRYAVTSEV, in VDI [Journal of Ancient History]. 1940, n. 2, p. 234 (in Russian).

32. L.P. MARINOVICH, *Alexander Makedonskij i greki* [Alexander the Great and the Greeks (in Russian)]. Moscow, 1993, p. 39-40.

ched India and received those 500 elephants, used in the battle against Lysimachus (App. Syr. 54), but – Antigonos, already killed. «... πε-  
 σόντος δ' Ἀντιγόνου κατὰ τὴν μάχην ... ἐφεδρεύων δὲ αἰεὶ τοῖς  
 ἐγγὺς ἔθνεσι καὶ δυνατὸς ὢν βιάσασθαι καὶ πιθανὸς προσαγα-  
 γέσθαι ἤρξε Μεσοποταμίας καὶ Ἀρμενίας καὶ Καππα-δοκίας  
 τῆς Σελευκίδος λεγομένης καὶ Περσῶν καὶ Παρθυαίων  
 καὶ Βακτρίων καὶ Ἀράβων καὶ Ταπύρων καὶ τῆς Σογδιανῆς  
 καὶ Ἀραχωσίας καὶ Ὑρκανίας καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ὅμορα ἔθνη μέ-  
 χρις Ἰνδοῦ ποταμοῦ...». The order of mentioning of all these pro-  
 vinces properly indicate the march of Seleucus to the East. Moreover,  
 such a campaign looks senseless before 301 B.C., because Antigonos  
 was still alive (App. Syr. 54), and not somewhere else, but on the West  
 of the future empire of Seleucus. It is hard to imagine that he would  
 peacefully wait till Seleucus came back from India. It was impossible  
 for Seleucus to start a campaign for solving Eastern problems and then  
 to come back to Antigonos. To march to India through all these regions  
 having at own rear such a strong force and relying just on Phrigia and  
 Syria seems to be extremely dangerous. An action of such a scale could  
 be undertaken just when the problems with other candidates on royal  
 throne were solved. Thus, if Megasthenes was sent to Mauryan court  
 for signing peace agreement between Seleucus and Chandragupta, this  
 could take place only in the IIIrd century B.C., since Seleucus needed a  
 few years to conquer the lands between Syria and India.

Could Megasthenes meet Porus before 317 B.C. or not will be  
 absolutely clear from the analysis of the long-discussed phrase from  
 the *Indika* of Arrian (V. 3): «...συγγενέσθαι γὰρ Σανδροκόττω λέ-  
 γει τῷ μεγίστῳ βασιλεῖ Ἰνδῶν καὶ Πώρῳ ἔτι τούτου μείζονι». The  
 correction, proposed by Ch. Lassen and E. Scheanbeck on  
 «...Ἰνδῶν καὶ Πώρου ἔτι τούτῳ μείζονι» looks very doubtful. The  
 only explanation to the fact, that from the time of the first edition of  
 the fragments of Megasthenes' *Indika* by C. Müller and their transla-  
 tion by J. W. Mc'Crindle this correction was accepted as absolutely  
 necessary<sup>33</sup> was a hypnosis of the image of Sandrocottus-

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33. This correction has been included in the last edition of Arrian' works  
 without any comments: ARRIAN, *Der Alexanderzug. Indische Geschichte*. München -  
 Zürich, 1985, p. 622.



Chandragupta, who has put (as the Classical tradition supposes – not without the help from Alexander) the foundation of the Mauryan empire and had to overcome in magnitude all other kings, more or less connected with Alexander from the one hand, and from another – desire of some of the scholars for different reasons to exclude the possibility of Megasthenes' coming to India during Poros' reign. Thus, O. Stein's argument in favor of the correction<sup>34</sup>, that for Arrian Poros was a figure much more powerful, is totally unconvincing. F. F. Schwarz has clearly demonstrated that Arrian was writing his *Indika* on the facts belonging to the epoch of Alexander and all the rest he was consciously missing<sup>35</sup>. For Alexander – beloved hero of Arrian, and for Arrian himself Poros was a figure of exclusive importance. In battle with Poros Greek-Macedonian might was broken. And very colourful figure of this Indian king was highly respected by Alexander. After withdrawal from India he oriented his satraps on the maintenance of peaceful contacts with Poros<sup>36</sup>. It was namely Poros, who due to his connection to Alexander, became an Indian hero of Arrian. It was namely Poros, to whom Alexander has given all the lands before Hyphasis river (Arr. Anab. V. 29. 2; VI. 2. 1), in battle with him Alexander's horse Bukefal has died (Strabo. XV. I. 29; Diod. XVII. 95. 5), being a "Barbarous" he has demonstrated true royal dignity (Arr. Anab. V. 19. 1-3). Neither Arrian, nor Diodorus of Sicily, nor Plutarchus tell us anything similar about Sandrocottus. Curtius Rufus (VIII. 13. 6; IX. 2. 3), Diodorus of Sicily (XVII. 87. 2; 93. 2) and Plutarch (Alex. 62) inform, that king of the *Prasii-Gandaridae* had an army a few times as more powerful as that of Poros, but this information concerns not Sandrocottus-Chandragupta, but the last king of Nanda dynasty, called in Classical tradition Xandramas. Such exaggerations of his might had to justify withdrawal of Alexander's army from India. During Alexander's campaign Sandrocottus has not yet gathered his own army, since he was not a king. These are historical and philological arguments. Besides them, this phrase in its uncorrected version seems to be logical, but in

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34. O. STEIN, "Megasthenes"..., p. 234.

35. F.F. SCHWARZ, "Arrian's Indike...", p. 194-195.

36. T.S. BROWN, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Schwanbeck's and Lassen's version is became hardly translatable – it is not clear to whom «ἐπὶ τούτῳ μείζονι» belongs. If to Sandrocottus, then why author choose such a strange words' order? One correction – that proposed by A. A. Vigasin, does not brake sense of this phrase, but even strengthens it. Anyway his version can't be accepted as well, because in uncorrected version clear logical relation between «μεγίστῳ» and «μείζονι», comprising the qualitative characteristics of both kings, is visible. In the variant, proposed by A. A. Vigasin such relation is removed. So, the most reliable and position is would be to deny the senseless correction and return to the initial reading, according to which Megasthenes has met «Sandrocottus, the greatest king of India and Porus, who was even greater than that». O. Stein's wish to show that uncorrected text looks illogical, because after one «greatest» king another «greater» is mentioned<sup>37</sup> has no sense, because before meeting with Chandragupta-Sandrocottus («the greatest king of Indians») Porus, who was greater than that was killed (in 317 B.C. (Diod. XIX. 14. 8)) and they ruled as we know in different regions of India.

There is another argument for the possibility of Megasthenes' meeting with Porus. In the period between the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. and expulsion of the Greek troops from India in 317 B.C. there were many revolts of local rulers in India, who fought for power between each other and against Greeks in general. Porus was set a governor of all the lands till Hyphasis river (Arr. Anab. V. 29. 2; VI. 2. 1). It is natural that such an appointment presumed a kind of subjugation, though formal, because as a rule Alexander was setting local chiefs as satraps (Arr. Anab. I. 17. 1; III. 5. 2; IV. 15. 5; Curt. VIII. 12. 5-6 etc). In 321 B.C. the diadochs have recognized Indian kings' power. It is very possible, that mission of Megasthenes was aimed at the realization of this decision of the diadochs, if to take into consideration that there was no satrap on the territory of India besides Eudemus. In any case there is nothing impossible in it.

Now we can just guess, how many times did Megasthenes come to Sandrocottus. It's only worthy of noting that the verb

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37. O. STEIN, "Megasthenes" ..., p. 234.

«ἀφικνέομαι», used by Arrian for description of Megasthenes' visits to India (Arr. Anab. V. 6. 2) can not be treated as interviewing Sandrocottus, as J. W. Mc'Crindle and V. R. R. Dikshitar proposed. It means absolutely the same as the verb «συγγενέσθαι» in the parallel place of Arrian's *Indika* (V. 3). It is impossible to look for a sense of «talking» in these verbs, which obviously mean «to arrive» or «to come». It is much more reasonable to state that Megasthenes came to India a few times, since there was no practice of permanent diplomatic missions in ancient India, and one can hardly find any reason for him to stay for a long time. Megasthenes could be replaced by Deimachus because of his age and enthronement of the new Indian king Bindusara. Reference of O. Stein to severe climate as the reason of replacement of Megasthenes is very weak: climate in Kandagar, where Megasthenes lived before he came to India is not softer, than in India; following O. Stein himself, it is hard to imagine, that after living for 10 years in India, climate would become the only reason for returning home. The idea of P. H. L. Eggermont can't be accepted either. We know that Megasthenes visited Pataliputra (in any case he was there as well): «... ἐπέμφθησαν μὲν γὰρ εἰς τὰ Παλίμβοθρα ο μὲν Μεγασθένης πρὸς Σανδρόκοττον ...» (Str. II. I. 9)<sup>38</sup>. This fragment of Strabo's "Geography" he did not mention.

So, as to the biography of Megasthenes, the most reliable facts are the following: in about 324 B.C. he was appointed as an assistant of the satrap of Hydrosia and Arakhosia Sybirtios, before 317 B.C., most probably – after 321 B.C., he met Porus – the ruler of the North-Western part of India and at the beginning of the IIIrd Century B.C., in any case after the battle at Ipsos at 301 B.C. Megasthenes has been sent to India, possibly, for the signing of the peace agreement between two neighboring countries.

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38. «...They were sent to Palimbothrae; Megasthenes – to Sandrocottus...» (transl. by G.M. B.-L. and M.B.).